



MEDIA RELEASE – 9 Sept 2011 Immediate release

## **ONE OF THE REGION'S MOST SUCCESSFUL MUSIC EDUCATION CHARITIES WINS FUNDING TO EXTEND ITS WORK TO ADULTS.**

Over the past 12 years, Plymouth Music Zone has won a number of awards for the innovative way it uses music to transform the lives of some of the most disadvantaged children and young people. The Devonport based charity has been piloting its work with adults for the past 2 years in the hope of achieving the necessary finance to extend its success to vulnerable adults including the elderly and the disabled. PMZ has now picked up two pots of funding worth around £120,000 over 2 years to enable it to kickstart a major programme of work.

PMZ's Executive Director, Matt Griffiths, who first set up the charity in 1999 says it's difficult to believe how far its come:

**"When we first created Plymouth Music Zone, it was one musician working out of a cupboard in a local authority building delivering to children in primary schools throughout the city. I never imagined we'd end up changing so many people's lives and proving that music works equally powerfully with adults. We knew from all our pilots and the demand for what we do that we had to find a way to secure funding to allow us to deliver this much needed work to adults. What a fantastic start and wonderful news."**

Almost £90,000 of the funding is support from the National Lottery through Arts Council England. "Project Dis-labelled" is about using music with the most marginalised adults who wouldn't usually have access to such opportunities including work with adults with profound and multiple disabilities, the elderly in residential homes and Dementia Units across the city and with groups of people experiencing mental health issues. It also involves a number of special projects working with national organisations like the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. A further £25,000 comes from the Adult and Community Learning Fund from the Skills Funding Agency managed by the National Institute of Adult Community Education and was one of only a handful of awards given throughout the country. That funding will allow PMZ over the next 6 months to create a new accredited music course for unemployed adults, "Soundskills – the Music Maker" as well as working with groups of adults with learning disabilities using music to help them learn new skills and open up progression routes.

PMZ's Development Director, Debbie Geraghty, says it's been a long hard road to obtain the funding: **"In a way it's quite an historic moment for Plymouth Music Zone which has always been seen solely as a young people's charity. But we've seen time and again that music can help everyone. It really isn't an easy financial climate at the moment so it took a lot of hard graft to finally get this funding. We were driven by the fact that all the vulnerable groups we'll now be working with will need every bit of support they can get. Wanting to overcome the loneliness and social isolation of an elderly person in a residential home, for example, is certainly a powerful motivator. That's worth fighting for."**

The music sessions and training programme development will start in earnest in the coming weeks and will involve working with other partner organisations from across the city. **For further information or potential photo or filming opportunities please call Debbie Geraghty on 0787 579 9882.**

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